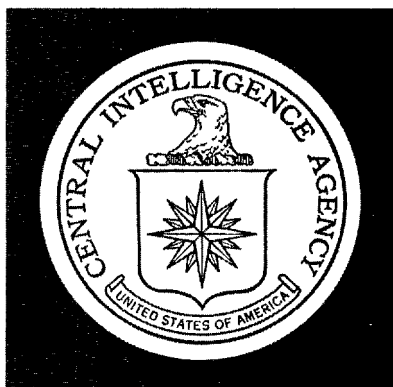


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25X1

6 August 1968

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Central Intelligence Bulletin

CONTENTS

25X1



Malaysia-Philippines: The two nations may have useful talks during the regional conference in Djakarta. (Page 5)

25X1



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Next 4 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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Malaysia-Philippines: The two nations may be able to have useful informal talks during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations conference which opens today in Djakarta.

Philippine President Marcos currently appears to favor conciliation with Malaysia. Last week in addition to speedily damping down press speculation about the reported presence of Malaysian ships close to Philippine waters, he canceled a routine Philippine armed forces exercise in the Mindanao-Sulu area to avoid possible accusations of "saber rattling." Marcos has also postponed until at least 15 August the previously announced withdrawal of his ambassador and staff to Kuala Lumpur.

Despite these placatory gestures, Marcos also is reported to have instructed his Foreign Ministry to prepare a white paper on the collapse of the talks on Sabah that would place the blame on Malaysia.

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